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Harbor Comments

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The Portland Harbor Superfund Site on the lower Willamette River between the Broadway Bridge and Sauvie Island is contaminated with many hazardous substances. The most widespread contaminants harmful to human health are polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs-now banned) and dioxins/furans. The most widespread contaminants of ecological significance are PCBs, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), dioxins and furans, and the pesticide DDT (now banned). EPA has determined that human health and environmental risks posed by the Portland Harbor site are high enough to take action under the Superfund Law, and it is high time that the EPA stop deliberating and start acting.

Alternative I, EPA's preferred alternative, reduces -- but does not remove -- risks to human health and the environment to acceptable levels by dredging and/or capping 291 acres of contaminated sediments and 19,472 lineal feet of contaminated river bank, followed by 23 years of monitored natural recovery. The preferred alternative also includes disposal of dredged sediment in both an on-site confined disposal facility and upland landfills. This alternative will cost about \$746 million and take 7 years of construction in the river. This alternative will address waste that poses the greatest threat to people and the environment through construction and relies on monitored natural recovery to continue to reduce remaining lower contaminant concentrations to acceptable levels.

It is high time, again, to stop deliberating and start acting. Ideally, the EPA should be doing more, and actually removing the risk to human and environmental health. If the preferred option is the best the EPA can do, then by all means, do get started ASAP with it.

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